

December 19, 2013

Stone and Sharlynn Parker

PO Box 448

Leavenworth, Wa 98826

Chelan-Douglas Land Trust

c/o Mickey Flemming

PO Box 4461

Wenatchee, Wa 98807-4461

Dear CDLT,

We would like to thank you for the work you have done in Merritt this summer. We are delighted to have such a significant open space project in our neighborhood and to have been a part of creating it. Please put us on your list of volunteers for maintenance and advising for the stewardship of this area. We love the land and want to help take good care of it. We would also be happy to attend any meetings where our input could be helpful, so please feel free to pass on our contact info/email along so that we could be involved.

This chunk of land is significant to wildlife and to public contact with nature. As the growth of population increases the public contact decreases. As more people move into an area, the less that area is accessible to the public. We wanted to see this wildlife corridor remain as is, and full of things to enjoy. If you look to the east and west of this land the trees have been clear cut, houses built and public access cut off. The views from this "park" are extraordinary: wild mountain goats on the cliffs of Nason Ridge, waterfalls coming off both valley walls, the salmon swimming up stream, beavers sliding in and out of the water, deer, bear, grouse walking through, high snow capped mountains views, and nice big cedar and doug fir trees. Without "open space" lands, all of this winds up with ugly, mean, territorial, unfriendly, with no trespassing signs. We are all stewards to this land and to the earth, if we can't walk where we want, we won't love it, and we won't treat it well. I've seen too many fences, loss of river access, and this is exactly why we need these open spaces mixed in close to private land.

What this does for the area- Anyone driving by can enjoy a few minute walk to the river. If you live in the area this is a nice river access park, and a great asset to our community. There are times in the summer that my family and I walk to this area as

much as 7 days a week, to play in the sand, cool off in the river, or look for morels. I love that nobody is going to shoot me for walking to the river.

You asked me, "What did this land purchase, from the CDLT, do to or for your family?"

The CD Land Trust, Mickey Flemming and I have been on the phone and emailing for about 5 years to make this happen. Now it is a much bigger project than anticipated when I first made the phone call. Our only hesitation in giving more money to this project is the lack of money. We have been asked to donate an additional \$500 to this project, which I see as a good thing, but money is tight. It is always the people who have little, that give a lot. I might not be able to pay my taxes on the sale of this land, or fix our car, or buy a working fridge, but I have a lot that many don't. Also what this sale did financially for our family is this; I was like so many Americans (but on a small scale) "upside down," "Land rich money poor." We got caught up in the real estate bubble and I was dishing out \$1600 per month in interest payments of which about \$700 was going to this land. We had the idea to buy land and build a house for my mom, but came up short on funds, time, ambition and health. Once that bubble got burst that became a \$700 a month bill, to walk to the river. Which has been too much for our family. With the sale of this land I directly paid off three major loans, and credit cards. **And we can still walk to the river.** In the seven years that we have owned this land we have been good stewards, and have shared our access with neighbors and friends, and that has set the mood of such a cool place.

We wish you well in your endeavors in Chelan and Douglas counties and hope that further work develops in the upper valley (i.e. Merritt). In a side note, there is much local history here that may not be documented anywhere. We know people who know some of it, and feel it is pretty extraordinary.

Wishing you the best in the holiday season and the New Year.

Sincerely,

Stone and Sharlynn Parker